

News story: Lord Tariq Ahmad's Eid message

As Minister of State for human rights and freedom of religion and belief, I wish you all Eid Mubarak.

At this special time for Muslims the world over, we must not forget those for whom such festivities pale into insignificance due to the issue of conflict and human suffering.

This Eid, my thoughts and prayers go out to all those who are affected by conflict around the world, for the holy land, and Syria, Burma and Yemen and especially those who have lost and are separated from their families.

The situation in Syria is a humanitarian catastrophe. The conflict is now in its eighth year; over 400,000 people have been killed, and half Syria's population displaced.

But the UK is not a distant onlooker. We have committed £2.71 billion to the Syria Crisis since 2012, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. We've also committed over half a billion to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen since the conflict began in 2015 and £59m to support the Rohingya.

Yet despite these conflicts we must never give up hope. We must persevere. Whether it is through the pursuit of diplomacy, our peacekeeping operations to restore stability and build nations, or our service to humanity, Britain continues to play our part.

We are an incredible nation, enriched by our multi-ethnic, multi-faith democracy, where Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and indeed, people of all faiths and none define the rich tapestry which is modern Britain. People irrespective of faith, community or background are able to reach their potential, coming together to contribute to the prosperity and progress of our nation.

So at this special time for Muslims, it is a celebration for all as it reflects the strength of the diversity of our country and our people.

Eid Mubarak to all.